

NEWSLETTER of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE TEACHERS OF AGRICULTURE

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

This issue is an attempt to bring to the attention of NACTA members some of the current thinking in and about the field of Agriculture. As was expected when the issue was planned, not all of the desired material was collected. No one is being CENSORED because of a failure to perform this service, but we do need to face the issue—do we or do we not support the efforts of the organization?

Please do not pass lightly over the article by Mr. Corbus, it needs "digging into." I personally want to see NACTA do something very definite about this "Basic Course in Agriculture." One major aim of this course should be to reach (recruit) more students; at the same time we can re-examine our approach to

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see if we need a similar basic course for those students we already have in our departments.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By **Burton W. DeVeau**

Ohio University, Athens, Ohio

As the time for the 1958 NACTA Conference rapidly draws near, I would like to encourage each one of you to make your final plans to attend and encourage other members of your department to attend the Conference with you. Prof. E. D. Moore and his Program Committee have a very interesting and stimulating program which includes panel discussions and outstanding speakers presenting timely topics relating to agriculture curricula, successful teaching and the functions of the NACTA in the future.

At the 1957 Conference Mr. C. L. Schmucker stated the need for "Let's Go Men." He stated several axioms: "Let's go and work; let's go and teach; let's go and give that extra something; let's go and work; let's go and teach; let's go and live the NACTA has enjoyed a very wonderful existence through the efforts of

its officers and members. This is because each member, I believe, is a "let's go man."

Now it is our duty to consider the future. Let's take a look at the objectives of our Association and plan how to utilize them in the future development of the NACTA and in the development of the colleges and universities we represent. The NACTA is not just another member organization to join for prestige. It is a "Let's Go Association." We need to keep it this way.

As we make our plans for attending and participating in the 1958 Conference let us take another look at Mr. Schmucker's "Let's Go" axioms. Let us resolve to adopt these axioms and utilize them in our daily work and at the 1958 Conference. By doing this we will insure progressive growth in our Association, in the departments we represent, and in our own personal development.

SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

By Ralph A. Benton
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois

Recently the following news item appeared in the local newspaper which serves a number of communities in this area; "The _____ Township High School Board agreed to investigate the possibility of finding a way to promote interest in the school's agriculture program during a meeting at the high school last night. The principal told the board there are 27 enrolled in the course now. Of that number 12 will graduate, 10 are in the junior class and five in the freshman class. The principal also stated that the number of agriculture students has been declining over the years and a way should be found to inform incoming freshmen of the possibilities in the field of agriculture."

Is this same thing happening in your state with respect to vocational agriculture, at least in some schools? Is this a contributing factor to the reported declining enrollments in the Land-Grant Colleges of Agriculture and in other colleges and Universities giving instruction in agriculture? This problem was discussed by a panel at last year's NACTA annual conference. More recently Dr. F. M. Churchill, Director of Agriculture, Abilene Christian College, Abilene, Texas, has made an extensive survey of this same problem.

Why are fewer farm boys taking the vocational agriculture course in their high school? Assuming that a high quality of teaching is maintained, are the boys losing interest in farming as a subject because to many it can no longer become a vocation because of lack of opportunity, or because

of too high costs or because fewer farm ers are needed to produce the nation's food and fiber? Recently I read that the farm population of the country now amounts to about 12% of the total. The figure for 1950 was 16.6%. Is this trend now being felt in our secondary schools' agriculture programs and what will be the continued impact on our college departments?

At a recent midwestern state agricultural extension conference, a panel composed of state and National 4-H leaders came to the following conclusions:

1. Sixty-five to seventy per cent of our farm boys and girls will not be living on farms when they are adults.
2. Since few of the boys and girls will be returning to farms, leaders must concentrate on developing the INDIVIDUAL in 4-H club work rather than providing education in agriculture and home economics.
3. Leaders must develop personality and understanding in each individual and his ability to get along with people.
4. Leaders need to take an active part in providing information to help young people select a vocation.

This philosophy of change is being recognized and accepted by many of our educational leaders of rural young people today. It is equally important at the college level. Director H. D. Corbus and past NACTA president Dr. E. B. Knight have long advocated this approach in our teaching, as have others in the organization. Let's give this serious attention as we move ahead.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

By E. F. Low
Central Missouri State College, Warrensburg, Missouri

The resolutions committee has been doing some work in preparation for the report at the 1958 convention. Some of the committee members that were appointed have not responded. However, I am sure we will have a report. I sent a letter to each department that

held membership last year asking suggestions on the association's activities. At this writing, I have received a few suggestions and I know I shall receive many more before convention time.

Each member should consider what he believes the association should ac

accomplish, then send his idea to the resolutions committee, and we will see that the suggestion is considered by the appropriate committee.

One suggestion that should be considered by the entire membership is whether or not a study group should be set up to determine what should be included in the course, "Basic Agricul-

ture," which several schools are contemplating offering to all beginning agriculture students. If NACTA does not do this job, some other group will.

Probably we should more clearly define what our job is in agriculture and work out actual procedures to get more of the things accomplished that we have been talking about.

A BASIC STUDIES COURSE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

By H. D. Corbus

Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan

Changes in the order of all things are accepted. Educational systems have been jolted. Certainly, instruction in the field of agriculture has no sanctity of permanence, with one exception. Food and adequate nutrition are indispensable in the lives of folks. Abundant, even surplus, food supplied by our modern production technology have all added to our need for re-examination of our pattern of instruction in agriculture.

A perspective horizon of more than fifty years of personal observation of the changes in instruction in agriculture in our state and nation provides a framework for viewing these changes in the light of their contributions to the whole subject. What seemed to be sound, as well as effective, if perhaps a bit expedient in methods and procedures, at one time, may now appear less important. These may be more clearly seen when the whole is considered, with no vested interest program promotion involving special personnel.

It has been a long route from what was first included in the course of study in agriculture in the oldest College of Agriculture in this nation, to the present one in our state, (with its accompanying Rose Bowl attainments.) There has also been a very great diversion in purpose and objectives from the "Keep them from leaving the farm" type of courses in agriculture, to the "Show them all the opportunities relating to farming," because we are needing (and getting) fewer farmers each year. This last change has been more noticeable in the secondary schools than in the higher levels of instruction, where research

and organizational personnel training have been emphasized. There is plenty of evidence, however, that something has to "give," if higher educational programs in agriculture are to do more than promote programs.

It is extremely interesting to try to connect the corn, pig, cotton and garden clubs of the early type of instruction with the national glamor of the International 4-H Congress, or the American Royal Future Farmers Convention and their \$275,000 National Headquarters, without a glimmer of vested program interest oozing through the seams. The support and training of personnel for these programs by the institutions of higher learning in agriculture seems to indicate the emphasis is being placed on "Programs," rather than on basic instruction in our national agriculture.

The resolution passed at the Third Annual Meeting of the NACTA endorsing a course offering in Basic Agriculture, in institutions of higher learning, especially those dedicated originally to instruction in agriculture, might well be a much greater contribution to the improvement of teaching in agriculture than was recognized at that time.

The success of this course in Basic Agriculture will of course rest on the ability of instructors to present and develop a broad perspective of the subject named "Agriculture." One thing will need to be done specifically, and that is to bring out in bold relief the part Farming, as such, occupies in the broader subject. Too many students, as well as adults, not enrolled as students, regard all in-

struction in agriculture as direct training for farming. Again the term, Farming, will have to be considered in light of a family-supporting vocation, as an investment project, and perhaps an avocation which might return enough cash to make it a contributing part of a part-time vocation.

The overall presentation of the cultural and economic aspects with national implications in agriculture can be more uniform in its contents and might be somewhat similar in many institutions. The more specific presentations of sources and amounts of cash, and the methods used to secure this cash, would need to be tailored to the areas selected for study. It is in this area that instructors

with wider experience would be better able to present the new course.

The problems of allotting proper emphasis to each part in the limited time for a basic studies course, needs to be studied. There are too many and they are too large to be taken up here. The development of this course in Basic Agriculture, so it can take its warranted place among other basic study courses in our new conception of higher education, could be a major contribution to that part of our national educational system.

There could be no better place for this to be done than by the members of the NACTA and it should not be delayed.

A DEAN OF AGRICULTURE SPEAKS

"A Bold Curriculum Change"

By Harold C. Love

University of Houston, Houston, Texas

In the fall of 1956 the University of Houston instituted a bold change in its agriculture curriculum. A Bachelor of Science degree with a major in AGRICULTURE ECONOMICS replaced the Bachelor's degree with a major in Animal Husbandry or Agronomy.

The Agriculture Department was established at the University of Houston in 1949 and during the period 1949-1956 a substantial number of students were graduated. In the spring of 1956 an occupational study was conducted among the graduates of the Agriculture Department and it was learned that only 12 per cent of the graduates were actually engaged in the production phase of agriculture—these working on farms or ranches. The remainder of the graduates, excluding those in the Armed Services, were scattered throughout industry, Federal Agricultural Agencies, and teaching, with many of them in businesses dealing with agriculture or agricultural commodities.

Although the graduates were being trained in "technical" agriculture, the majority of them were obtaining employment in fields akin to, but not actually in, production on farms and ranches. In order to meet the challenge of this

situation, curriculum changes were made that would better equip a graduate to fill those positions requiring training in business as well as technical agriculture.

In the new curriculum a student may elect courses from one or two fields—Agricultural Business or Public Service Administration. Those interested in pursuing a specialization such as a professional agricultural economist either in private or public employment, managers of farms or farm cooperatives are directed into courses emphasizing Agricultural Business. Those interested in farm supply businesses which serve agriculture, (including sales of farm machinery, fertilizer, feeds and agricultural chemicals), newspapers, farm magazines, television and radio stations, agricultural public relations, and farm organizations would select the option in Public Service Administration.

The new curriculum will give a graduate an increasing amount of training in the various business phases of agriculture in addition to his basic technical instruction, and in this program students are prepared for those occupations where technical knowledge of agriculture, the economics of production and marketing, and business management are required.

A VISITOR SPEAKS

By Harvey L. Kincade

**Tractor-Special Duty Equipment Representative
International Harvester Company
Columbus, Ohio**

A manufacturer of farm equipment has two major problems—first, to keep the current product up to date; but more important, will be his concern with the farmer of tomorrow. How will HE farm? What will he NEED? How can a manufacturer translate those needs into a workable program for implement and tractor engineers? In this process of translation, one has to work with agricultural college and universities. These schools are well manned and well equipped; their single objective is to promote better agriculture. It naturally follows that they would be relied upon for basic research. Generally speaking, agricultural colleges work on projects with a special promise and in many instances come up with a prototype solution to a particular problem. From this point a manufacturer strives to pick it up as soon as possible, work with this solution and perfect it for the market this year or in years to come.

In addition to universities there are many other sources of ideas for tomorrow's trends. One source, for example, will be the men who sell machines. They know the competitive situation inside and out. They understand why some products sell and others do not. From these salesmen, many needed improvements are incorporated in a machine that an engineer would overlook.

The farmer is another prolific source of ideas. He knows better than anyone else what the shortcomings of a given piece of equipment are. He also has enough ingenuity to come up with good recommendations. A farmer was largely responsible for the concept of the combine. It was a farming family, the McCormicks, who gave us the reaper. The farmer is a universal source of information as there are corn farms, cot-

ton farms, wheat farms, livestock farms and many others. From these farms, which are in every section of the country, come information which, in monetary value, would be difficult to visualize.

Other sources of information would be dealers and county agents. They know the product as it is today and they can be very informative as to what they would like to see in the future. County agents are great reservoirs of information. They not only know the machinery phase of farming, but they know agronomy, conservation, marketing, or the whole picture. These persons are very closely linked again to the farmer who is the user of equipment offered for sale for his particular application. The closer a manufacturer can get to the farmer the better. Form all this information compiled, a market analyst would be consulted. He would be concerned largely with customer motivation: What does the farmer really want and why? To give you an example, farmers are giving more attention to comfort and convenience in tractors. They have preferences as to which operations should be performed with left or right hand. It has been found that farmers do not attach the same importance as manufacturers do to certain features.

Another very important factor on coming trends would be the farmer's thoughts on farm practices. A good example is the new way some farmers are handling corn crops. By using a combine with a corn picker head on it and a crop dryer, they can store shelled corn instead of ears of corn. Not only do they cut down on harvesting costs, but they do not need large corn cribs and they do not have costly handling problems. It is evident that more system is getting into farm practices all the time. It is a manufacturer's job or duty to encourage it.

I AM ON LEAVE IN GRADUATE SCHOOL

By Hal B. Barker

Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, Ruston, Louisiana

I have often heard educators say that the M.S. is the teaching degree and the Ph.D. is the research degree. This idea may have been true in times past, but it is my belief that this statement cannot be justified at the present or in the future. Advanced graduate work (that leading to a Ph.D.) is essential to the present day college teacher in order for him to develop an appreciation for the modern advances in scientific agriculture and to give him the technical training necessary to interpret these advances for his students.

During the last few weeks, we have read and heard much about the need for more training in SCIENCE if we in America are to keep pace with other world powers. It seems to me that very often the general public thinks only of the PURE sciences in this connection and never recognizes that AGRICULTURE too is a science. Many who give some recognition to agriculture as an academic field, think of it only from the standpoint of "farming" and fail entirely to recognize its scientific aspects. Even we in the agriculture teaching profession do not always recognize the scope of our work.

We cannot teach farming—the business of producing plants and animals for profit—as well as we can teach scientific agriculture. Through a good knowledge of scientific agriculture is required to be a good farmer, yet there are other prerequisites with which an individual must be naturally endowed in order to be successful as a farmer. Some of these qualities we as teachers cannot develop in our students, but it is certainly our duty to present scientific agriculture to our students so that they might have a good background and the inspiration to proceed further with academic work.

I am on leave in graduate school so that I may better qualify myself to teach scientific agriculture in this scientific age. Admittedly, there are personal as-

pects as well as the professional ones. Truly, I want to develop my appreciation for the wealth of improvements and modern advances and I want to learn to interpret these for my students. Also I am interested in personal betterment, both salary and rank-wise. I firmly believe that further college study on the part of every man who has twenty or twenty-five professional years ahead will pay off both personally and professionally. The person who fails to avail himself of this self-improvement will have only himself to blame in years to come when he is discriminated against in salary and rank, and much younger men who have acquired more advanced training are given the recognition.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prof. H. D. Corbus, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, is chairman of the Nominating Committee. He would appreciate receiving your nominations for officers of the NACTA. Offices to be filled are: President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, and one Director each from the Central and Eastern regions.

President DeVeaue is interested in learning if your school desires to host the 1959 NACTA Conference. Please contact Dr. DeVeaue, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, if you plan to make a bid to serve as host in 1959.

CORRECTION: Our apologies to Mr. W. W. Hoy for the following errors made in his article, "Some National Legislation Affecting NACTA Members," in the first issue of the NEWSLETTER. "More Research" is the first topic instead of "More Members." Under the last topic, "Anticipated," the sentence should have read as follows: Further legislation to assure that retirement dollars of NACTA members will DISINTEGRATE into smaller pieces of buying power. JAW

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